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## A CRAB TIDE

I tread where the mangroves end  
in a high tide of red fiddler crabs—  
machined claws, slow primordial heads  
like sidestepping stones  
wet-cemented in ooze.

From their tatty jaws, new planets  
mass and tumble like pearls,  
empires of new sand moons  
forged in the ebb  
where barbarians raise their hostile claws.

These coral relics, this foraged rot  
are home, or half-home—  
we falter, we twostep on the annihilating tide  
where each fringe colony  
flares and dies, flares and dies,

And breadfruits and ragged palms  
whip as if they might lift off  
to find an older idea of a shore;  
metal beach shacks cling, cling  
like limpets armoured in tin.

Now the idiot Pacific rolls its tongue—  
here the razing of culture is ritual,  
each anthill perfect and perfectly erasable,  
perched where the black backwater  
will smash overhead and bury it all.